

CHAMPIONS Wycombe Wanderers came away from Bishop's Stortford with a solitary point on Saturday, having dominated 70 per cent of this Rothmans Isthmian League encounter. The Blues felt cheated too, as a result of Stortford's first goal, which they claimed was scored after a blatant hand ball.

There are two main reasons why Wycombe did not sew this game up long before the final whistle. First and foremost, the home goalkeeper Paul Kitson played a blinder. He made a string of first class saves from efforts that would have beaten many other ordinary mortals. Secondly, Wanderers' finishing left a lot to be desired. For the second Saturday running they totted up a vast number of corners but were unable to capitalise on these set pieces. In all they had 15 compared with Stortford's four.

Wycombe's football on Saturday was patchy. At times, they had Stortford well and truly on the run and looked superior in every department then they would lapse into errors and allow the home side to come back at them. Overall, however, one has only to compare the amount of work given to the two goalkeepers to glean a true reflection of the game.

While Kitson was hurling himself about thwarting Wycombe's eager forwards, Blues' keeper Dave Bullock — coming in for the unavailable John Maskell — was inactive for long periods. Poor Dave had lit-

tle chance with the goals too.

After Wednesday's Anglo-Italian triumph, I half expected signs of a 'hangover' at Rhodes Avenue. But Wanderers wasted no time in making their presence felt by going ahead with only three minutes gone.

B. Stortford 2, Wycombe Wanderers 2

Report by **STUART EARP**

The goal was beautifully worked. Dylan Evans and Geoff Anthony combined neatly before the latter poked the ball through to Tony Horseman. 'Bodger' took a couple of paces forward and tucked a shot past the advancing Kitson.

But before the celebrations had finished, Stortford hit back to equalise — barely 60 seconds later. Kitson's goal kick was headed on by Kevin Mulhern to Peter Watson. The big centre forward took the ball down and sprinted past John Delaney before planting the ball wide of the helpless Bullock. Delaney immediately raced after the linesman appealing for a hand ball decision. From the stand I could see no offence but Delaney was adamant that Watson had used his hand to control the ball — "one of the most blatant hand balls I've ever seen" said the Wycombe skipper afterwards.

After those two goals the game went off the boil a little until Horseman broke through again, thanks to Clarke's poor header, but this time the veteran

striker sent his shot just the wrong side of the upright.

Then Stortford took a surprise lead through their most dangerous player — centre forward Watson. From a long ball upfield Paul Birdseye, who was disappointing on Saturday,

headed out straight to Watson's feet on the edge of the box. Leaning back, Watson sent a dipping volley screaming past the startled Bullock and into the net — a glorious goal.

It took the Blues some time to get over that blow and their forwards were regularly trapped offside by the home back four. But thanks to Dave Alexander's hard graft in midfield, the Blues looked the more dangerous side and hit back with a good burst before half time.

Kitson saved bravely at Anthony's feet and then Terry Reardon drove in a shot which was blocked and sent the rebound over the top. Before the break the impressive Alexander saw a volley well taken by Kitson and Evans lashed a powerful drive just too high.

The Stortford goalkeeper might have been hoping for a quieter time of things after the interval but he was quickly in action again when fisting over Evans' firm header just three minutes into the new half.

Throughout the game Stortford's defence has looked woefully weak at times. Neither

full back was particularly safe while Clarke and Flack were both slow in the middle of defence. They often put Kitson under pressure with faulty back passes and it was from one of these that the Blues drew level in the 66th minute. Horseman sent his corner to the far post where Keith Mead headed down into the six yard box. Delaney swooped quickly to hook the ball home for his second goal in two games.

Only a few inches robbed Wycombe of the lead three minutes later from their umpteenth corner. Alexander's flag kick fell to Mead at the far post but his header struck the woodwork and was cleared. Seconds later Kitson produced his best save of the game. Evans, a much improved player as a result of his long run in the side, left the two centre backs stranded for pace as he burst through the middle. Kitson came out but could hardly have seen Dylan's thunderous shot as it left his boot. Somehow he got a hand to the ball and parried brilliantly.

Stortford conceded four more corners before the final whistle and from one of them Evans headed just over the top. In doing so, Dylan cut his eyebrow in a clash of heads and had to leave the field for two stitches. Howard Kennedy substituted.

STORTFORD: P. Kitson; C. Harris, F. Flack, V. Clarke, B. Davis, K. Mulhern, P. Leakey, J. McKenzie; P. Twigg, P. Watson, K. Gaine. Sub: C. Clarke (not used).

WYCOMBE: D. Bullock; P. Birdseye, K. Mead, J. Delaney, R. Eaton; D. Alexander, T. Reardon, M. Holfield; A. Horseman, D. Evans (sub H. Kennedy 87 mins), G. Anthony.

Referee: C. Boswell (Gillingham).
Half-time: 2-1. **Goalscorers:** Stortford — Watson 2 (4, 20) Wycombe — Horseman (3), Delaney (66).